



DODGE COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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BEWARE of the Grandparent Scam

The "grandparent scam" seems to be ramping up again in our area. My office has received complaints that this scam is continuing to occur with disparaging consequences for some grandparents.

This scam has been around for approximately 13 years and our county residents, family and friends are still being victimized. How does it work and how are people victimized you may wonder?

Well, the scam usually comes in two forms:

1. The telephone caller impersonates the grandchild and acts like he/she is distraught or crying, which leads the grandparent to believe that they are truly talking to their grandchild.
2. The telephone caller states he/she is calling regarding their grandchild, usually some type of doctor, police officer, or court personnel.

The details of the scam usually include that the grandchild is on vacation and has gotten in trouble and has been arrested or has been in a car accident and is either in the hospital, in a foreign country or jail. If the caller states that the grandchild was in a motor vehicle crash it usually involves the grandchild hitting a pregnant woman or public official or even killing a child. The details of these calls **alarm** the grandparent and the grandparent is shaken up wholeheartedly believing the details of the call to be true. The grandparent is so shaken up that they do not think rationally and the caller quickly instructs them to obtain money or some type of gift card to help the grandchild and alleviate the situation. The caller states the money is needed to either pay for an attorney, bond them out of jail or get them out of the foreign country. The grandparent is instructed to obtain a certain amount of money/gift cards and either send the money/gift cards by mail or wire the money. The imposter states it is imperative that the grandparent not tell the grandchild's parents. They take advantage of the grandparent's emotions, love and concern for their family.

These imposters tend to target the 65 and older generation because they are usually more trusting, are home to answer the phone and are more accessible. Once emotions get involved and the desperation and urgency in the caller's voice is heard, they don't think rationally. These calls tend to occur later at night or earlier in the morning when they don't think as clearly.

These scammers have made \$10,000.00 in a day if they do it properly. Some of our residents are out hundreds to thousands of dollars.

Tips on what to do to **NOT GET SCAMMED**:

1. Don't panic! Slow down and think. Don't react quickly. Ask the caller questions that the imposter couldn't possibly know or answer.
2. Hang up the phone and call that grandchild or other family member who could substantiate the whereabouts of the grandchild.
3. Think about how the scammers want you to get the money to them (wire transfer, overnight delivery, prepaid cards, or gift cards).
4. The scammers usually ask for you to read the numbers to them that are on the back of the gift cards over the telephone.
5. Never wire money based on a phone call.
6. Remember, hospitals, jails, attorneys, and court systems don't accept gift cards as payment.

Family members, talk to your elderly family members and make them aware of this scam or many others so this doesn't happen to them!

Questions may be directed to Sheriff Dale J. Schmidt.

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